Cinnamon Sugar

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by Aklani [archived by ssa_archivist]

Summary

What if it had been Whitney who came back and rescued Clark from the scarecrow field, not Lex.

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He wasn't mad at Clark, not really, not in the sense that he wanted to hurt him or anything. Whitney had always liked Clark. He was quiet, unassuming, and - nice. There really wasn't enough there to find fault with in any way, shape or form. It was just that Clark seemed to be creating a complication; a complication Whitney could not afford to have at the moment. He had enough of those.

Whitney was under a lot of pressure. He was failing trig, and it was jeopardizing not only his place on the football team, but the potential scholarship that was hanging in the balance. This attracted his father's attention, and too much attention from Jack Fordman was not necessarily a good thing, particularly after the incident which had occurred over the summer. Jack was breathing down Whitney's neck, and bugging the shit out of him. Whitney couldn't wander off to take a piss without Jack wanting to know what he was doing and why.

Jack was being such a pain in the ass because he suspected Whitney was gay. Whitney knew it himself, and had since the age of twelve, but he kept his mouth shut about it and his mind focused on other things. Over the summer, however, he'd developed a crush on Brent Smith's older cousin, Kenny, who'd been staying over en route to Colorado. Kenny was openly gay, and although he and Whitney hadn't done anything physically, they'd exchanged a few e-mails - suggestive e-mails. Jack had seen one, and hit the ceiling.

He'd been calmed by Whitney's earnest confession that they'd staged the whole exchange to freak Brent out, and that it was all just a prank. He'd still been in trouble, with Jack raging about "gossip" and "reputation." Whitney had simply pointed out that his reputation was solidly grounded in the heterosexual given that: a) he was the captain of the football team, and b) he was dating the sexiest girl in school.

Jack had been satisfied, somewhat, but he was still watching Whitney like a hawk, and when the trig grades came into question, the pressure increased. Whitney spent day and night either practicing football, trying to appease his father's paranoia, or studying his trigonometry. He was neglecting Lana, and knew it, but could do little about it.

One evening, when Jack had gone off to the VFW hall to play poker with some of his buddies, Whitney had snuck away from his homework to go visit his girl, only to find her gracing Clark Kent with a peck on the cheek. Clark Kent - the kid who the whole damn school knew was in love with Lana.

Complication.

Big complication.

Whitney needed Lana to help him maintain the illusion of status quo, sexually speaking. He needed her to help him with his trig, even though she wasn't much better at it than he was, and he needed her support as a friend. Lana was more his friend than anything. He needed her help to get him out of Smallville, and through college. From there he felt he could finally be free. If he could get the education he needed to get a good job, he could then chuck the football and the pseudo machismo, and do whatever the fuck he wanted, even if that included screwing the tailback.

So he wasn't mad at Clark as much as he was mad at himself. If he'd been in any other situation, with a father a trifle more understanding, and a town not made up primarily of rednecks, he might have just admitted he was attracted to other guys. Unfortunately Smallville was just not the place to do that, and Jack Fordman would kill him, not to mention be completely humiliated. Whitney loved his father too much to do that do him, even if he disagreed with Jack's belief that being gay was wrong. He was mad at himself, and only mildly annoyed at Clark, because there was now the risk of losing Lana.

Whitney had only been half joking when he'd suggested Clark be the scarecrow that year. The others had picked up on the underlying angst in the words, however, and spurred him on to make Clark the official selection. He'd agreed, reluctantly. He still wasn't truly mad at Clark.

It was not until that afternoon, that Whitney's frustration grew into anger. He'd been in the habit of running every morning since football season started, and that morning he'd overslept, resulting in a dressing down from Jack. Later he'd gotten the results of his most recent trig test. The news was not good, and he would have to brace himself for yet another fight with his father that evening. The final straw had been at lunch, when he'd gone looking for a shoulder to cry on, and discovered Lana had snuck off with another girl to go shoe shopping in preparation for the upcoming dance.

Whitney had fumed through the rest of the day. By the time they ambushed Clark after school, he had worked himself into a fury, and when Clark dared take a swing at him, Whitney snapped. He'd felt somewhat of a sadistic pleasure in dumping Clark into the bed of his truck. He'd driven out to the scarecrow field with a total disregard for the body thumping around in the back, and the kick he'd planted in Clark's backside as they tossed him to the ground, had felt damn good.

The fury fled after they'd stripped Clark down to his skivies and strung him up on the wooden cross, where he hung limply, wheezing and moaning. The nagging fear that something was wrong crept in and Whitney stood back to survey their handiwork with some trepidation.

"I didn't hit him that hard," he said quietly.

"He's faking, Whit." Brent said, chuckling. "He's going for the pity angle, but the minute you let him down he's going to be off like a shot. I've seen him run, the kid is a gazelle. You let him loose and we'll never catch him, especially in this." He gestured to the tall stalks of corn waving around them. The field stretched for miles. It would be easy to lose oneself in it.

"I guess."

The others agreed with Brent's assessment, and reminded Whitney that if they didn't get going they ran the risk of making their girlfriends angry by being late for the dance. Whitney brought up the rear guard as they turned to make their way back towards the road and the truck. He spared a glance behind him as they were leaving. Clark was watching them with an expression of abject fear on his face. Despite the cold, his body was slick with sweat.

Something was wrong; Whitney knew it. Throughout the evening his mind was not on the dance and his pretty escort, but the kid in the cornfield who's face had been seared into his memory. Lana asked him why he seemed so distracted; she comforted him when he ascribed it to the bad trigonometry grade. The tightening of her arms around him as they danced, did little to ease his state of mind.

The appearance of Jeremy Creek was a bad omen. He had been the scarecrow the year of the meteor shower. Chloe Sullivan explained this to him later as Whitney commended her on her heroics. Jeremy had been bent on revenge. He'd sprayed them all down with a fire hose in preparation to launching some sort of electrical attack. Chloe had grabbed the fire hose at the opposite end of the gym and blasted

him back out the doors before anything bad happened.

"Gave him a dose of his own medicine," she'd said.

Whitney wondered if Clark would come for revenge.

He wondered if Clark would live.

The incident upset Lana, although she endured it like she endured everything, in stoic silence. She was sopping wet, angry, and afraid, but responded favorably to Whitney's kisses. He left her on her front porch, and hurried home. He was there only long enough to change clothes and grab a flashlight.

In the dark and the cool of the night, the cornfield was spookier than hell. The tall stalks rose above his head and were so thick the light could not penetrate very far within them, leaving dark and eerie voids from which anything could appear. Whitney was still young enough to have an active imagination when it came to ghosts, goblins and things that went bump in the night. He didn't like being surrounded by darkness.

Or fog, which had risen as the warmth of daylight fled and the cool of an autumn night descended. It was unusually cool for early October. It had to be near freezing as Whitney pushed his way through the field. He could feel the bite of it despite his jacket. Clark had to be freezing.

Increasing his momentum, Whitney cleared the last row and burst into the small clearing where the cross stood high among the waving cornstalks. He was panting, both from exertion and fear as he raised the flashlight towards the pale figure hanging against the dark fabric of the sky. There was a spark of green light as the beam struck Lana's necklace still hanging from around Clark's neck. Clark wasn't moving.

With some horror, Whitney realized he wasn't breathing either.

"Oh, God. Oh, shit, oh, shit!"

He hurried toward the cross, tucking the flashlight into his pocket as he pulled at the ropes. All but one came loose easily, but the bindings around Clark's right arm had worked themselves into a wicked knot, and Clark's body pulling at them made it nearly impossible for Whitney to get them untied. He pulled out his pocket knife and began frantically sawing at the rope.

"Come on!" he gritted. "Come on, damnit."

The rope was thick, the knife, dull, but Whitney felt the strands parting one by one. When the last of them snapped he threw the knife to the ground and scrambled to catch Clark as he fell from the wooden structure. Whitney collapsed under his weight, but managed to keep them both from hitting the ground too hard. Clark lay there in the dirt, limp and cold. For a moment Whitney wasn't sure what to do. He sat there, feeling helpless and scared, before something kick started his brain, and he started CPR. The chill of Clark's skin was alarming. His lips had a definite blue tinge.

"You fucking breathe, Kent!" Whitney growled. Tears were running down his face despite the words and the tone. "Breathe! Damn you!" He choked on the words, repeating them as he forced his own breath into lungs that stubbornly refused to fill on their own. Whitney felt like slapping him, but resisted such a stupid and futile effort.

"Please," he sobbed finally, sitting back on his haunches with his hands held palms upward in supplication. "Please."

There was a soft sound, not quite a gasp. Encouraged, Whitney resumed his efforts with more vigor, and was rewarded with a full fledged gasp as Clark's body jerked against him. Chest heaving, Clark started to breathe again, and Whitney could feel the pounding of his heart beneath trembling hands. His eyes, however, remained closed, and he did not regain consciousness. Instead he moaned, and thrashed feebly, tossing his head back and forth as if he were in pain. He was shivering in the cold air.

Whitney took a moment to search for Clark's clothes, but couldn't locate them. Doug had thrown them deep into the corn field. He returned almost immediately. Afraid that Clark would stop breathing again, Whitney did not want to leave him alone for any length of time.

In retrospect, Whitney would agree that he should have called an ambulance, or taken Clark to the hospital himself, but at the time he wasn't thinking clearly. He was terrified. He had been responsible for putting Clark there in the first place, and Clark had very nearly died. His father's anger, the loss of his reputation, and possibly his future would be the very least of his problems. Jail time and a police record of assault and attempted murder were more frightening.

Whitney would take care of Clark himself, and when Clark came around, they'd talk, work everything out, and things would be cool. Clark was a reasonable guy. The only question would be where to take him. It didn't take Whitney long to decide.

He put his arms beneath Clark's shoulders and started to drag him back to the truck. "Hang on, buddy, hang on."

He would take Clark to what the kids sometimes called, "The Hay Loft." It was actually an old dairy barn near the scarecrow field that had once been part of another farm. The old farmhouse had burned down years ago. Most of the land had been sold to Luthor Corp, as it abutted the Ross land they'd purchased when they'd turned the creamed corn factory into the fertilizer plant. The remaining parcel had been purchased by old man Peterson, who owned the scarecrow field.

Peterson didn't have any dairy cattle, but grew hay on that particular acreage. He stored the hay in the old dairy barn until he sold it. This time of year it would be full, and one could hide among the bales of sweet hay, warm and safe. Kids had frequently gone there to make out, or do more risque things, until old man Peterson caught a couple with their pants down, literally, and threatened them with a shotgun. Since then, no one dared.

Whitney dared. He knew the only reason Peterson had been out at the dairy barn the night of the shotgun incident, was because his old hound Daisy had gotten loose. Daisy had set up a howl all the way across the field from the house when she'd caught the whiff of intruders in the barn. Had said intruders not been going at it so hot and heavy, they would have heard her baying as she came nearer. Peterson had followed her, and made the startling discovery.

Since then Daisy had gone to doggy heaven, and Peterson was much too old to go traipsing around in the middle of the night policing his property from randy teenagers. Whitney just hoped that no one else had come to this realization, because a popular time for people to sneak off to The Hay Loft for some nookie had been after a dance. If he showed up with Clark, and someone else was already there, it could be bad.

Whitney was in luck. There were no other cars or trucks hidden behind the barn and the old shed adjacent to it. Whitney pulled the truck in between the two where it would be hidden both from the road, and the Peterson farmhouse across the field. A glance at the farmhouse revealed no lights on, a good indication that old man Peterson had already turned in for the night. He sighed.

Clark lay slumped against the passenger door, still out, still not breathing very well, and still shivering despite the fact Whitney had

blasted the heater during the short trip. Whitney got out, hurrying to the barn door. Peterson had installed a padlock, but a quick jerk with a crowbar pulled the whole assembly off the old wooden door, allowing Whitney inside.

It was dark, and smelled of dust, and hay, and bird shit. Bales were stacked in uneven rows and columns all around the edges and deep in to the center of the barn. It reminded Whitney of the video game Tetris the way the rectangular blocks were stacked in such a helter skelter type manner. He found a niche between two low stacks in the left corner, then scanned the barn for something to lay down upon the scratchy hay. A tarp was revealed, thrown over an old threshing machine. Whitney pulled it aside, shook the dust off, and folded it into the niche before going back out to the truck.

He returned with a blanket and Clark. He'd put his jacket on Clark to protect him against the cold between the truck and the barn, but it seemed to help very little. Clark struggled feebly against the manhandling, but Whitney managed to get him down and covered with the blanket. There, inside the barn, insulated by the thick layer of hay all around them, they would be warm. There was just room in the wedge he'd found between the stacks for Clark, and for Whitney to sit next to him. It was like being inside of a snow fort made of grass.

Whitney flicked on the flashlight. In it's beam Clark looked even more pale, and his forehead glistened with sweat despite the way his teeth were chattering. If he wasn't better by dawn, Whitney wasn't sure what he would do. He chewed on his lip and tried to think of a way out of the dumbass situation he'd gotten himself into, but nothing was coming to him. He'd have to simply fess up and face the music, and hope to God whatever was wrong with Clark wouldn't kill him. It was very possibly pneumonia, although how he'd gotten pneumonia in such a short time eluded Whitney.

He grew encouraged when Clark's eyelids fluttered.

"Kent?"

Clark moaned, but focused blearily at Whitney. "Juh-Jeremy..."

"No, it's me, Fordman. Clark...."

"Juh-Jeremy. S-suh-stop him."

Of course, Jeremy must have stopped by the scarecrow field. For old times sake? Why the fuck hadn't he let Clark down?

"He's been arrested. It's okay."

"Hmm." Eyes rolling, Clark hovered somewhere between being alert and unconscious. It took him a minute to refocus. His eyes were watering, not from tears, but from the pain that caused his face to twist into a grimace. "Whuh-Whitney?"

"Yeah? Clark, look, I'm sorry. I should have never done this to you. You've got to snap out of it though. I...."

"Lana."

There was a brief and utterly irrational resurgence of Whitney's anger and jealousy. "What about her?"

Clark's eyes opened. "Necklace," he grated. "Get it off." He pushed weakly at the blanket before his eyes rolled back and he was still again.

Whitney frowned. He'd never been fond of Lana's favorite necklace, and in fact had been rather relieved to get rid of it, at least temporarily. He thought the whole idea behind it was morbid. If Lana's parents had been killed in a car accident, would Nell have given her earrings made out of the metal of the car involved?

He pushed the blanket down, and opened the jacket to reveal Clark's bare chest. The crystal of Lana's necklace glittered rather ominously in the light of the flashlight and Whitney would have been lying to say it didn't give him the heebie jeebies. It didn't really sparkle, like a normal crystal, but instead it seemed to have a light coming from deep inside of it, like the phosphorescent glow of a lightning bug inside a glass jar. What Whitney also noticed made him somewhat ill. Clark's chest was a tracery of swollen capillaries; veins criss-crossed his skin like a spider's web. Normally such an occurrence would appear reddish or blue. Whitney knew this because his aunt, who had been a nurse all her life and spent a great deal of time on her feet, had a bad case of varicose veins in her legs. The veins pulsing across Clark's chest were a sickly green color, much like the glow of the necklace, and the deathly white pallor of his skin was tinged green as well.

It could have been caused by the reflected glow, but somehow Whitney didn't believe it. It looked too strange. It occurred to him then to wonder at all the times Clark had acted strangely in Lana's presence, and he realized that what he'd taken for shyness at the time, might very well have been illness. Something about Lana's necklace, possibly some weird radiation that clung to it, made Clark sick.

Whitney gave the necklace a sharp tug, and the clasp broke. Almost angrily he carried it to the barn door, and once outside he threw it as hard as he could, as if he were tossing a Hail Mary down the football field from one end to the other. The necklace sailed out into the darkness, disappearing into the stubble of the hayfield.

He returned to Clark, shutting the door firmly behind him. The ugly veins were fading, and color was returning to Clark's skin. So was warmth, but Whitney drew the blanket up around his chin anyway. He was breathing easier too, and appeared now to be simply sleeping instead of in a sickness induced unconsciousness. He murmured something Whitney didn't catch, before turning onto his side and curling up under the blanket.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Whitney slumped down into the hay. He turned off the flashlight, leaving them in darkness.

The small window high in the eaves of the barn faced east, and a watercolor toned light could be seen coming through it. The barn's interior was no longer in darkness, but in shades of soft dove grey as morning broke. Whitney could make out the colors around them now; the dusty green-gold of the hay, the dark blue of the blanket, and the bright red and yellow of his jacket. Sometime sometime during the night Clark had removed the jacket, and Whitney was now using it as a pillow.

Clark was using Whitney as a pillow.

Whitney had no intention of falling to sleep, and could not recall doing so, but he'd awakened only moments ago and had been startled to discover himself lying down. He'd also been startled to discover Clark's head resting on his shoulder and one arm wrapped around him as if he were a giant Teddy bear. Whitney's first instinct had been to shove him off, but it had not quite come to bear. Something about the intimacy was comforting. He wanted it to stick around for a while.

It reminded him vaguely of a time when he and Lana had been studying together, sitting on the glider on Lana's front porch. Lana had drifted off to sleep against Whitney's shoulder. He figured English Lit did that to a person, and had sat very still, reading the text book by himself, rocking the glider ever so gently. Lana had dozed in the warm circle of his arms until Nell stuck her head out the door to tell them she had some popcorn made if they wanted some.

It hadn't been like this, not at all. There was something more intimate

about lying down with someone, and feeling their body pressed close along its entire length. Clark was nothing like Lana either. He was heavier, harder, made up of nothing but wiry muscle and a strength his lanky frame belied. Comparing Clark to Lana was like comparing a two-by-four with a feather pillow. He smelled of hay, and the musky odor of sweat. Lana always smelled like something floral, or fruity.

Clark was also much more attractive than Whitney seemed to recall, even more so than Kenny Smith, who had been extremely handsome with his black hair and pale blue eyes. Clark was somewhat more exotic, less boy-next-door and more European chic, but Whitney had never noticed it before. Why, he couldn't speculate. There must be something about Clark that disallowed people seeing how really nice looking he was, because if Lana had ever noticed, she sure as hell wouldn't be with Whitney. He hated to admit that, but he felt it true.

Reaching out a hand, he lightly traced the arc of one dark brow over one large, almond shaped eye, then moved to brush against the sweep of Clark's cheekbone. Native American to be sure, he thought, with those eyes and those cheekbones. The strong jaw balanced everything out, turning pretty into handsome, and the feminine - masculine. Long dark lashes, full lips, and Clark slipped the boundary between attractive into beautiful. Whitney felt as if he'd been suddenly drenched in cold water and wakened to a new awareness.

It meant more complications.

Ah, shit.

He withdrew his hand as Clark sighed. Presently the dark lashes fluttered, opening to reveal green eyes slightly sleep muddled. His head up-tilted and those eyes found Whitney's face. His lips parted slightly as if he were going to speak, and in that moment Whitney was overwhelmed with the desire to kiss him. Any resistance he may have had was battered into submission by an urge so strong, more so than anything he'd ever felt before, that it could not be withstood.

His mouth covered Clark's, cutting off words and breath. One hand slipped to Clark's nape, holding him close as lips moved together in a passionate meld. As if they were ripe fruit, Whitney sampled the fullness of Clark's lips, and parted from them with their sweetness still lingering upon his own. He let go, and Clark stared at him in complete and utter shock before rolling over onto his back.

Whitney sat up on one elbow, trembling, unable to speak. Clark

rubbed at his eyes with thumb and forefinger.

"Either I'm still sleeping, or you've lost your mind," he whispered, then cut his gaze back to Whitney who hovered over him anxiously. "You just kissed me!"

"I think I've lost my mind." Whitney said hoarsely. "I'm sorry."

Clark continued to stare at him.

"I'm gay," he blurted, feeling stupid almost immediately.

It wasn't how he'd ever imagined making that statement, but the admission, finally spoken, was like relieving some pressure from a boil about to burst. With it went so much stress, and so much angst, that Whitney felt as if he'd just run a marathon. He was suddenly very tired.

"Wow."

Whitney blinked. "Wow? What the fuck does that mean?"

"It means, wow, Whitney, nothing more." Clark's eyes narrowed. He ran a hand through his hair. "Where are we?"

"The Hay Loft, Peterson's old barn."

The laugh indicated that Clark knew the reputation of the place. "So, first you try to kill me, and then you make out with me?" He levered himself up on his elbows. "May I suggest counseling?"

"Fuck you, Kent." Whitney flung himself back onto the tarp, angrily jerking the blanket off of them both. He was suddenly hot and uncomfortable. He looked up into the rafters at the drooping cobwebs and the little birds still sitting there with their heads tucked beneath their wings.

"Does Lana know?"

"No, nobody knows, so you better keep your mouth shut." Whitney fixed him with a baleful glare. "Understand."

"Perfectly. I'm not sure I want everyone to know I spent the night with you in The Hay Loft either."

"Nothing happened, Clark. You were sick, and slept all night. I fell asleep watching you to make sure you didn't stop breathing again."

This made Clark's eyes widen. "What do you mean, again?"

"I came back, after the dance, and you weren't breathing. I had to do CPR." He argued with himself about how much to reveal. "I was scared. I didn't know what to do, so I brought you here because it was warm and..." He sighed. "I'm sorry, Clark, really. I'm just under a lot of stress right now."

There was a moment of silence. Whitney glanced over to find Clark looking down at him.

"Believe me, Whitney. I understand what it's like to have to keep secrets," he said quietly.

"If you tell me you're gay, I'll tell you you're lying."

"I'm not gay - or at least I don't think so - it's not something I've really thought about before."

Whitney started at him, and almost laughed at the bemused expression on his face. "Would you let me kiss you again?"

The question had been meant as a joke, but as he said it, Whitney realized he really did want to kiss Clark again, and the tone shifted into a seriousness he hadn't intended. He waited with bated breath as Clark turned upon him an expression he could not read.

"You saved my life."

"That doesn't mean anything, Clark, especially since I'm the one who put your life on the line in the first place."

"Do you honestly want to kiss me again, or were you kidding?" Clark lay back down and looked him in the eye.

"I - I want to kiss you again."

Clark lay there looking at him. He didn't say anything, but when Whitney rolled over and kissed him again, he felt a response. One light kiss was followed by another, then another, until Whitney realized with some surprise that what they were doing did indeed fall under the category of making out.

Whitney ran one hand down Clark's side, feeling the lean body tense against him. Clark was still clad in nothing but his boxer shorts, exposing his body to more of Whitney's admiring eye and his roaming

hands. He felt the lean muscles over Clark's ribs and hips, and the flatness of his stomach, before his fingertips grazed the elastic waist band of the shorts. One of Clark's hands was on his shoulder, the other was rubbing at his chest, stirring the nipple erect. The whole situation was extremely erotic, and Whitney wondered if maybe he weren't dreaming.

A dream, he surmised, would be less awkward. The tarpaulin beneath them crackled, sticking to Clark's bare flesh and wrinkling lumpily under Whitney's ribs. He was hot, and the seam of his jeans dug uncomfortably into his thigh where he lay on it. A hangnail snagged against the cloth of Clark's shorts. Worst of all, and what convinced him he was not dreaming, was the fact he was fully clothed, and as their kisses grew more passionate, and their caresses strayed further south, Whitney's arousal pressed painfully against the confines of his zipper.

He drew back, and they both looked at each other, both short of breath. Clark was red faced and looked someone confused. Whitney suspected he'd never intended for things to heat up as quickly as they did, nor that he would find himself playing a contributing role. He lay there trying to catch his breath, and Whitney took advantage of the moment to get undressed himself; completely undressed.

"I can't believe I'm doing this."

Whitney lay down next to him and felt the tension. He made no further moves, but pressed close, luxuriating in the feel of the soft cotton boxer shorts, and the hard thigh beneath them. Although Clark had to be very aware of Whitney's erection against him, he made no effort to move away.

"I can't believe you are either." Whitney whispered.

"I've always admired you, you know." Clark said quietly. "You got the girl, the acclaim, the respect. I never got anything like that, except maybe the dubious distinction of getting on the honor roll every grading period since kindergarten."

"Sometimes it's a pain in the ass, especially when you have to keep stuff inside. If you have secrets, Clark, you wouldn't want to be where I am."

The green eyes were guileless. "Yeah?"

Whitney flicked a lock of dark hair off his forehead, and kissed him.

"Yeah."

His fingers traced a gentle circle around Clark's navel. He dipped his head and his lips found the hard curve of Clark's collar bone. He lapped at one breast, sucking and biting at the nipple, all the while letting his hand slip lower and lower until it breached the elastic and found the juncture of Clark's thighs. Soft hair, dampened with sweat met his questing fingertips, then the delicate skin of testicles throbbing with desire. He worked them, rolling them in his hand before moving it up to caress the silken heat rising above them.

Clark's breath hitched. His fingers found Whitney's hair, and dug into his back almost painfully as Whitney alternated his work at Clark's chest with the slow movements of his hand up and down the shaft of Clark's cock. Ironically, the same situation, described via e-mail, had been what had gotten Whitney in trouble with his father; only it had been Kenny administering to Whitney instead. Had Jack seen the e-mail that had followed it, wherein Kenny described in great detail how he would suck Whitney's dick, Whitney was sure the man would have keeled over dead.

Whitney was not sure he was going to go quite that far. He wasn't sure, given the way Clark was thrusting against his hand, that Clark would last that long anyway. He let go for a moment to push the boxers down, and Clark groaned, his cock twitching against his belly for want of Whitney's hand. Whitney hesitated, recalling Kenny's vivid description, then bent to blow softly against the head. Clark's high pitched whimper was encouraging.

He took Clark's straining erection in his mouth, probing the tip gently with his tongue. He pressed down on Clark's hips as they bucked, trying not to take the thick organ too deeply, too fast, but found himself wanting it as much as Clark did. He discovered how to open his throat without gagging, swallowed the entire shaft, and wrapped his mouth around it, pressing it tight against his palate with his tongue caressing the underside. It drove in and out of him, feeling and tasting so good. He sucked hard, pulling it deeper with every inward thrust until he could take it no further.

At the last minute he pulled back and away, and Clark came hard, semen spilling out over his chest and stomach in a series of rapid bursts. Whitney watched, aching with a burning need to relieve the pressure mounting in his groin. He reached back behind him to grasp his jeans, digging for his wallet and the condom he knew was inside. Clark was still, panting and gasping, Whitney tore open the package

with his teeth, spitting out the piece of foil, and removing the rubber. He put it on one handed. With the other he bundled the blanket up into a ball.

Clark watched him through eyes dulled with the lingering effects of climax. He made no resistance when Whitney removed the boxers entirely, nor when Whitney knelt between his legs to kiss away the come spattered across his chest and stomach. He grew hard again. Whitney spared him a swipe of his tongue, making them both moan.

"Roll over." He knelt back on his haunches. "It won't be so bad."

At first Whitney was sure that was it, and Clark would put on the brakes, going no further. The look in his eyes was of mild concern, and curiosity, but getting head, and getting fucked, were two different things.

"You've done this before." Clark accused quietly.

Whitney sighed. "Yeah. I was thirteen, at football camp. Me and another kid snuck off to the boathouse. That's when I knew for sure." As if seeking some comfort, he rubbed at Clark's thigh, much like he would have rubbed a lucky rabbit's foot prior to a high stakes game. "That was the first and the last time, before now."

There hadn't been the opportunity, nor the desire, for anything or anyone else. He'd wanted to see what Kenny could show him, but there had been no way Whitney would have ever been able to set up a private meeting with Kenny without Brent, or Jack, finding out about it. The opportunity had passed, and now Jack was watching Whitney's every move. This situation had been a fluke.

Clark sat up. Whitney captured his mouth in a kiss, letting Clark toy with his lips and tongue for a moment, before breaking away. Clark lay back down on his stomach, his hips across the rolled blanket, and Whitney leaned over him, massaging his shoulders and back. The muscles were tied up in hard knots. Whitney squeezed his shoulders reassuringly, then moved down to work at points lower with the palms of his hands. He'd learned much from the masseuse Coach Walt sometimes brought in as a treat.

His thumbs traced the graceful curve of Clark's spine down over the tight rounds of his flanks. He pressed the thighs apart with his fingers, revealing the tightly closed pucker of the opening there. He rubbed it with a spit moistened finger, moving around and around until he could feel the muscles relaxing there. One finger went in easier than

expected, but the muscles closed around it almost immediately, and Clark went rigid. Whitney pushed deeper and felt the nodule he sought. He stroked it, grinned slightly at the moan that produced, and continued to move his finger in and out against it.

One finger became two, and two - three - until Clark was slowly rocking back against their action. Whitney knew how that felt. He remembered the need for more and how he'd begged for it, until the older boy he'd been with had complied. It had hurt, a lot, even though the other kid had a lubricated condom and a tub of butter he'd filched from the kitchens.

Butter, Jesus.

Clark had only a lubricated condom and a generous supply of Whitney's spit, and that was drying out as he got more and more anxious about moving on with things. A brighter light was starting to come in through the high window, foretelling the limitations of their time. Whitney braced himself, his hands on Clark's hips, and felt guilty because he knew it was going to hurt before it ever started to feel good.

He went in harder and faster than he intended, mainly because Clark chose that moment to move back against him. He heart a sharp intake of breath, but nothing more.

"You okay? I'm sorry, it hurts at first but...."

The dark head shook in a negative. His words were muffled against his arms, in which he had buried his face. "I'm okay."

Whitney caressed the small of his back. The muscles in Clark's shoulders flexed as he pushed back against Whitney's inward thrusts, something that turned Whitney on immensely. Again he found himself wondering how anyone could have ever overlooked Clark. Every curve of him, every line, could have been penned by Michaelangelo, for he was a work of art. Whitney himself was just as trim, his body honed by years of sports and physical training, and in a sudden fit of vanity (or was it something else) he longed for a mirror.

He wanted to watch their bodies melding together, moving in time to the music of their heartbeats. Sweat slicked flesh would press close, and pull apart as if dancing, seeking harmony. Whitney wanted to witness that moment of completion. He wanted to watch his own face as he came, his body arcing back from the connection point where his cock, buried deep within the body of another, spilled its essence. The

mirror, for that time, would become a picture frame, and they would be the art within it. His thoughts were poetic and silly, Whitney knew, but in the short time he'd had it for his own, he'd fallen in love with Clark's beauty. It was a beauty that inspired silly poetry.

Inflamed with desire he'd never felt before, he strained against Clark's body. He pulled it closer, wanting to drive deeper and become even more a part of it. He heard the building pressure as a roar within his ears, and saw it as bright lights flashing behind eyelids closed against the sweat running down his forehead. His breath caught in a sobbing gasp, and was released in a moan when he came, his hips locking into a staccato rhythm he could not control.

"Oh, God," he whispered, and slumped forward to rest his head between Clark's shoulders. His hands reached out to grasp Clark's, and their fingers interlocked as they both fought to catch their breaths once again. He continued rocking until his hips slowed, and they were still.

Breaking the connection, pulling out and becoming one again, was difficult. He wanted to stay a part of Clark, as if doing so could protect him from the outside world that put so much pressure on him to perform, to succeed, and to be something he wasn't meant to be. Failing that, he wanted to sleep within the circle of Clark's arms for the rest of the day. Never mind that the tarp was rough and clung uncomfortably to sweaty skin, or that the hay was scratchy and painful to bare flesh; they could stay here, warm and comfortable, and after a nap, make love again.

Clark raised his head, and moved Whitney's left hand. He was, Whitney realized somewhat distantly, looking at the time.

"Oh! Oh, no!"

Whitney was dumped unceremoniously into the hay. "What?"

Standing, Clark searched for, and located, his shorts. He continued to look around frantically as he pulled them on. "Where are my clothes?"

"You don't have any. Brent tossed them." Whitney made a mild protest as Clark donned his T-shirt. He was going to draw the line if Clark tried to steal his pants. "What is it?"

"It's six o'clock! I have to help get my parents to the farmers' market today. If my mom finds me missing she'll blow a gasket."

"Yeah, well, my dad is going to skin me alive for being out all night. Clark..."

He stopped, met Whitney's eyes briefly, and then looked away. Shame, and guilt, were written all over his features. "I have to go," he said, and jumped down to the barn floor.

"Clark, wait!" Whitney grabbed his pants and scrambled after Clark's retreating figure.

By the time he reached the door, one leg in his pants, Clark was gone. There was nothing left outside but acres of corn glistening with a sheen of sparkling dew in the early morning sunlight, and an empty stretch of roadway.

Whitney slumped against the door frame, and uttered a bitter laugh. Cinderella hadn't even left behind a shoe.

He ended up at the farmers' market himself, with Lana, seeking a moment to get Clark alone. He had a short exchange with Mr. Kent, and when Clark stalked off somewhat huffily, Whitney saw his opportunity.

He left Lana behind to scramble after Clark. "Are you mad at me?"

"No."

Whitney grabbed his elbow, stopping him just before the bridge that spanned the ditch separating the field from the parking lot. Luckily no one else was around.

"Look, I'm sorry, okay. What happened - we can just forget about it."

Clark cocked his head, and in that moment looked a hell of a lot older than he was, and heart wrenchingly beautiful. The morning sun turned his eyes a brilliant green, and highlighted the shine in his thick, dark hair.

"You don't get it do you?" he said. "You heard him. Nice play Fordman."

Whitney winced, then had to jog to catch up again. "Clark, come on, he didn't mean to slight you."

"Sure he didn't. I could have made that play."

"Why don't you? Walt would have you in a second. Shit, Clark, Brent swears you'd out-distance any defenseman in the league. Join the team."

Clark wrenched open the back of the Kents' pickup with a bang. "I. Can't."

"Why not?"

"Because he won't let me."

"Why?"

There was silence, and Clark's angry motions eased, as if he'd harnessed himself again. It would be short lived. He looked up at Whitney and met his eyes.

"You have you secrets, and I have mine. I won't be joining the team." The anger was still there, Whitney could see it, and like Whitney, Clark lashed out at whomever got in his way. "Why do you care so much anyway? Maybe you just like the idea of having the opportunity to screw me in the shower."

He jerked the crate of apples out of the truck, and in an amazing display of strength and dexterity, held it in one hand as he slammed the tailgate shut.

Hurt, Whitney retreated into anger himself. "You're a prick, Kent."

"Whatever."

"Clark!"

"Leave me alone."

Whitney watched him leave, inhaling deeply to regain the control over his temper. After a moment, he frowned, sensing someone's eyes on him. He turned to discover Lex Luthor leaning against the side of a sleek black Jaguar, watching him with a bemused, and somewhat ominous expression. It made Whitney nervous, and paranoid, and mad. To add insult to injury, when he turned away from Lex, he saw Greg Arkin chatting up Lana.

"Damnit!"

If it weren't one damn thing it was another. Whitney ground his teeth, sent bug boy packing, and received a pretty smile from Lana for his

trouble. As always, it soothed him out of his funk. He kissed her, and they went off to see more of the crafts for sale.

He tried desperately to put Clark out of his mind as he spent the rest of the morning with Lana. Her call, early that morning, had saved him from having to answer some uncomfortable questions when his father wanted to know why Whitney was up so early on a Saturday.

He was, he told Jack, taking Lana out to the farmers' market.

It still hadn't quite sunk in that he'd slept with Clark, even after seeing him again. He also wondered how much of Clark's anger was really directed at his father, and how much was directed at Whitney. Whitney was beginning to think the scarecrow incident, from its inception to the final result early that morning, had been the biggest mistake he would ever make in his life.

He was thinking about everything that had happened, and how the hell he would get it all untangled in his head, not to mention reconciled with Clark, as he turned out of the road from Lana's house onto the highway. Had he not been so deep in thought, and paying better attention, the thud of something, or someone, dropping onto the roof of his truck might not have startled him so badly. He barely held the truck on the road.

"What the...."

Whatever it was on the roof started rocking the truck, and fear, real fear, surged up as Whitney fought the steering wheel. Everything happened in a matter of seconds. He fought the wheel, but failed, and felt the truck starting to roll. He jerked at the wheel hard, trying to get the tires back on the pavement, but his attacker had no intention of allowing it. The truck lurched again. Whitney's head thudded against the steering wheel as the vehicle crashed down on its side. The airbag deployed, and the force of it slamming into his face knocked him back in his seat, and the consciousness from his body.

"So when are you busting loose from this joint?"

Whitney cracked an eye open and groaned. "Fuck you."

"You already did." Clark said quietly. He tossed a small bag onto the bed as he entered and took a seat in one of the ugly plastic hospital chairs. "Here, I figured you too manly for flowers."

With effort, Whitney struggled to a sitting position. His head was killing him, and so was his back from being bludgeoned by the airbag. He peeked into the paper bag and found it full of red hot cinnamon jelly beans.

He cracked a smile. "How'd you know?"

"Lana."

Popping a jelly bean into his mouth, Whitney grinned as the burst of spicy cinnamon made him feel better. "She was here earlier."

Clark's expression was inscrutable. "She really loves you, you know."

Whitney paused in the act of reaching into the bag for a second piece of candy. "I know."

"You should tell her the truth."

"I know." Whitney repeated. Instead of having another piece of candy, he folded the bag closed again, and put it on the bedside table. "I should." His eyes narrowed. "So did you come here to lecture me about coming out of the closet?"

"No, I came here to see if you were okay, and to apologize for being such a jerk this morning."

"Apology accepted. I figured you weren't mad at me anymore or you wouldn't have pulled my ass out of the truck before it exploded." He met Clark's eyes. "Thanks."

"Evens the score."

"I didn't know we were keeping score."

There was a long and uncomfortable silence. Whitney broke it.

"If I tell Lana the truth, what then? Are you going to swoop in and pick up the pieces?"

"If that's why you think I want her to know the truth, you don't know me very well."

Whitney snorted. "I *don't* know you very well, Clark."

"You know me a lot better than most."

"Why, because we had a tumble in the hay? I didn't get to know what's in your head via sexual osmosis. Don't be stupid." Whitney rubbed at his temple. "Look, I'm sorry. Like I said, let's just forget what happened, and try to start over. No tally sheets, okay?"

Clark got to his feet. "So you want to forget what happened?"

Whitney looked up at him. The expression on his face was still unreadable. "If it makes things easier, yes, I do. I don't need things to be any more complicated, Clark, and I know you disagree, but I can't tell anyone the truth yet, especially not Lana." He felt a brief surge of anger. "I'm sure you can understand that, seeing as how you have your secrets."

For some reason that hit a sore spot. The unreadable expression shifted quickly into one of fear, and anxiety, as if Clark had been reminded of something uncomfortable; something he couldn't discuss. It faded after a moment, and was replaced by a weary resignation.

"I'm not sure I want to forget, Whitney, but then, I'm not sure about a lot of things anymore."

"It shouldn't have happened."

Clark nodded.

"But I'm glad it did." Whitney added softly.

Their eyes met again, and after a pause, Clark came closer to the side of the bed. He leaned over, brushing his lips against Whitney's, and Whitney received them, welcomed them. The kiss lingered for only a breath, but their lips parted slowly, and unless Whitney was imagining things, reluctantly. Clark's long lashes rose over eyes the color of freshly cut hay; bright green and gold.

"I have to go," he said softly, and moved towards the door.

"Sure." Whitney said. The cinnamon, and the kiss, had left his mouth burning. He licked his lips.

Clark paused at the door, and turned back. "Call me when you get out, okay. I'll see what I can do to help you with your trig."

Whitney's eyes narrowed suspiciously. "Lana tell you about that too?"

"Yeah."

"Are you honing in on my girl, Kent?"

There was only a minute hesitation.

"I think Lana has more to worry about than you do." Clark said softly, and with a wry smile, he vanished into the hallway.

Whitney grinned, and reached for the jelly beans. Trigonometry had just taken on a brand new appeal.

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